



# ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS North East Asia



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## North East Asia

United Nations Environment Programme  
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Definition of an indicator is not uniform across the various publications, organisations and institutions that have been referred to in this publication. Efforts have been made to standardise the data for a particular indicator from the different sources but there still might exist some discrepancies in the data-reporting method. UNEP-RRCAP does not take responsibility for the same.

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## FOREWORD



Agenda 21 emphasized the need for developing indicators to provide the solid base for decision making at local, national, regional and global levels. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in 2002 reiterated the need for indicators to monitor economic, social and environmental progress for sustainable development. Goal 7 of the UN Millennium Development Goals is set for countries to ensure environmental sustainability through integrating principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

This report on 'Environmental Indicators for Northeast Asia' has been prepared to present the trends of twenty nine key indicators on air, water, land and biodiversity. It also presents trends on social and economic conditions through the selected indicators. Data have been collected for each indicator for each country in Northeast Asia for 1990, 1995 and 2000. This report provides an assessment of economic, social and environmental conditions in Northeast Asia based on available data and information. Lack of updated scientific database has been a major challenge in preparation of the report.

This report highlights that poverty in Northeast Asia is forecast to drop significantly by 2015. China's economic growth and prosperity has led to a reduction in the poverty numbers in the sub-region. The Human Development Index (HDI) increased consistently for all the countries of the sub-region except Mongolia where it slightly decreased during 1990 to 1995.

Desertification is an important environmental issue in this sub-region. Mongolia and China are being deeply affected by land degradation and top soil loss. Sustainable agriculture practices along with awareness about land management will help impede desertification. Air quality has worsened in the leading cities of this sub-region. Legal measures and effective policies are needed to counter the rising air pollution.

UNEP hopes that the 'Environmental Indicators for Northeast Asia' will be a useful document for government, non-government, regional and international organizations in the pursuit of developing policies and action plan. UNEP gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Environment Ministries, agencies, institutes and individuals in the preparation of the report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Klaus Töpfer'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Klaus Töpfer**

United Nations Under-Secretary General and  
Executive Director

United Nations Environment Programme  
August 2004

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